

# TRUXTON KING

A Story of  
...Graustark

By GEORGE BARR  
M'UTCHEON

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McCutcheon  
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(Continued.)

"He is no more," she interrupted quickly. "That's why I am afraid. If he is plotting against the crown, you may depend upon it he is laying his plans well. John Tullis, that man is a devil—a devil incarnate!" She turned her face away. A spasm of utter repugnance crossed her face.

"I am afraid of Peter Brutus. He is here to watch—everybody."

She leaned against the great carved mantel post, a tall, slender, lissom creature, exquisitely groomed in rarest Irish lace, her bare neck and shoulders gleaming white against the dull timbers beyond, the faint glow from the embers creeping up to her face with the insistence of a maiden's blush. He gazed in rapt admiration, his heart thumping like fury in his great breast. She was little more than a girl, this wife of old Marlanx, and yet how wise, how clever, how brilliant she was!

She was well named Ingomede the Beautiful.

"Does Baron Dangloss know this man Brutus?" asked Tullis, arising to stand beside her.

"I don't know," she said thoughtfully. "I have not spoken to him concerning Brutus. Perhaps he knows. The baron is very wise. Let me tell you how I happen to know that Peter Brutus is still serving Count Marlanx and why I think his presence signifies a crisis of some sort."

Her voice, always low and even, seemed lower still. "In the first place, I have a faithful friend in one of the oldest retainers at Schloss Marlanx. His daughter is my maid. She is here with me now. The old man came to see Josephine one day last week. He had accompanied Count Marlanx to the town of Balak, which is in Axbain, a mile beyond the Graustark line. Peter Brutus was with my husband in Balak for two days. They were closeted together from morning till night in the house where Marlanx was stopping. At the end of two days Brutus went away, but he carried with him a vast sum of money provided by my husband. It was given out that he was on his way to Sorros, in Dewbergen, where he expected to purchase a business block for his master. Marlanx waited another day in Balak, permitting Josephine's father to come on to Edelweiss with a message for me and to see his daughter. He—"

"And Josephine's father saw Brutus in Edelweiss?"

"No. But he did see him going into Balak as he left for Edelweiss that morning. He wore a disguise, but Jacob says he could not be mistaken. Moreover, he was accompanied by several men whom he recognized as Graustark mountaineers and hunters of rather unsavory reputation. They left Brutus at the gates of Balak and went off into the hills. All this happened before I knew that Peter was living in Edelweiss. When I saw him here I knew at once that his presence meant something sinister. I can put many things together that once puzzled me—the comings and goings of months, the secret reports and consultations, the queer looking men who came to the castle, the long absences of my husband and my—my own virtual imprisonment—yes, imprisonment. I was not permitted to leave the castle for days at a time during his absences."

"Surely you will not go back again!" he began hotly.

"She put a finger to her lips. A momentary silence followed. He was a new man. I do not like his appearance."

The servant disappeared through a door at the end of the hall.

"Then there were the great sums of money that my husband sent off from time to time," she continued, "and the strange boxes that came overland to the castle and later went away again as secretly as they came. Mr. Tullis, I am confident in my mind that those boxes contained firearms and ammunition. I have thought it all out. Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that I can almost see those firearms stored away in the caves and cabins outside of Edelweiss, ready for instant use when the signal comes."

"God! An uprising! A plot so huge as that!" he gasped, amazed. It is fortunate that he was not facing the door. The same servant, passing once more, might have seen the telltale consternation in his eyes. "It cannot be possible! Why, Dangloss and his men would have scented it long ago."

"I have not said that I am sure of anything, remember that. I leave it to you to analyze. You have the foundation on which to work. I'd advise you to waste no time. Something tells me that the crisis is near at hand."

## CHAPTER VII. AT THE WITCH'S HUT.

IN the meantime our excellent young friend, Truxton King, was having a sorry time of it. It all began when he went to the cathedral in the hope of seeing the charming aunt of the little prince once more. Not only did he attend one service, but all of them, having been assured that the royal family worshipped here quite as regularly and as religiously as the lowliest communicant. She did not appear.

More than all this, he met with fresh disappointment when he ambled down to the armorer's shop. The doors were locked and there was no sign of life about the shuttered place.

The next day King made a purely business call at the shop of Mr. Spantz. He looked long, with a somewhat shifty eye, at the cabinet of ancient rings and necklaces, and then departed without having seen the interesting Miss Piatanova.

At his room in the hotel he found a note addressed to himself. It did not have much to say, but it meant a great deal. There was no signature, and the handwriting was that of a woman.

"Please do not come again." That was all.

He laughed with a fine tone of defiance and went back to the shop at 5 o'clock, just to prove that nothing so timid as a note could stop him. On the occasion of this last visit to the shop he did not stay long, but went away somewhat dazed to find himself the possessor of a ring he did not want and out of pocket just \$30, American. Having come to the conclusion that knight errantry of that kind was not only profitable, but distinctly irritating to his sense of humor, he looked up Mr. Hobbs and arranged for a day's ride in the mountains.

Mr. Hobbs led his patron into the mountain roads early the next morning, both well mounted and provided with luncheon.

It is a good three hours' ride to the summit of Monastery mountain. And after the height has been attained one does not care to linger long among the chilly, whistling crags, with their snow crevasses and bitter winds. The utter loneliness, the aloofness of this frost crowned crest appeals, disheartens one who loves the fair, green things of life.

It was 3 o'clock when they clattered down a stone road and up to the forbidding vale in which lurked, like an evil, guilty thing, the log built, heavily timbered hut of the witch, that ancient female who made so secret of her practices in witchcraft.

A low thatched roof protruded from the hill against which the hut was built. As a matter of fact, a thin chimney grew out of the earth itself, for all the world like a smoking tree stump. The single door was so low that one was obliged to stoop to enter the little room where the dame had been holding forth for three score years, 'twas said. This was her throne room, her dining room, her bedchamber, her all, it would seem, unless one had been there before and knew that her kitchen was beyond, in the side of the hill. The one window, sans glass, looked narrowly out upon an odd opening in the foliage below, giving the occupant of the hut an unobstructed view of the winding road that led up from Edelweiss.

The two horsemen rode into the glen and came plump upon a small detachment of the royal guard, mounted and rather resolute in their lack of amiability.

"Soldiers, I'd say," remarked Mr. King. His eyes brightened and his hat came off with a switch.

"Hello! There's the prince!"

Farther up the glen—in fact at the very door of the witch's hut—were gathered a small but rather distinguished portion of the royal household. It was not difficult to recognize the little prince. He was standing beside John Tullis, and it is not with a desire to speak ill of his valor that we add he was clutching the slackest part of that gentleman's riding breeks with an earnestness that betrayed extreme trepidation. Facing them, on the stone doorstep, was the witch herself. Behind Tullis and the prince were several ladies and gentlemen.

Truxton King's heart swelled suddenly. Next to the tall figure of Colonel Quinnox of the royal guard was the slim, entrancing lady of his most recent dreams, the prince's aunt, the lady of the goldfish conspiracy!

The Countess Marlanx, tall and exquisite, was a little apart from the others, with Baron Dangloss and young Count Vos Engo, whom Truxton was ready to hate because he was a recognized outcast for the hand of the slim young person in gray. He was for riding boldly up to this little group, but a very objectionable lieutenant barred the way, supported in no small measure by the agitated defection of Mr. Hobbs.

The way was made easy by the intervention of the alert young woman in gray. She caught sight of the restricted adventurers—or one of them. So he quite accurately—and after speedily a swift smile of astonishment, turned quickly to Prince Bobby.

"Hello!" he cried shrilly.

"Hello!" responded the gentleman readily.

John Tullis found himself being dragged away from the witch's door toward the newcomer at the bottom of the glen. Mr. Hobbs listened with deepening awe to the friendly conversation which resulted in Truxton King going forward to join the party in front of the hut.

(To be continued.)

Brass polished only with rottenstone and oil will have a deep, rich yellow tone, while the acid polishes leave it whiter and more brilliant.

Cold water with but little soap should be used for washing colored silks. If the color runs, vinegar should be stirred into the water until the color sets.

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## REAL ESTATE IN SUBURBAN TOWNS

### STRAITFORD.

John Hannuschak, to Dora Werespy, an undivided one-half interest in lots 271 and 272 on map of Hollister Heights, bounded north for 65 feet by land of E. D. F. Hollister; east for 100 feet by Thompson avenue south for 50 feet by Jackson avenue and west for 100 feet by land of D. F. Hollister.

Joseph Lipsitz to John Zwiebel, a lot of land bounded north for 221 feet by land of Kitty Webster; east for 245 feet by land of E. O. Curtis; south for 188 feet by Highland avenue, and west for 230 feet by land of James Spargo, being lots 11 and 12 on the map of James Spargo, subject to a mortgage of \$1,000 in favor of Elliott W. Peck.

Jennie Beach Gasper of the Borough of Manhattan to Frederick C. Beach, a tract of land on the extension of South avenue, east of Elm street, known as Meachen Place, bounded west by land of Susan A. Barrymore and Elizabeth F. Curtis and Frederick C. Beach, for 150 feet; north by land of Frederick C. Beach, for 229 feet in a straight easterly direction to the westerly side of a ditch on the land of F. C. Beach, thence south along the westerly side of the ditch for 142 feet to the northerly side of South avenue, thence westerly for 216 feet along the highway to Elizabeth F. Curtis and the place of beginning, comprising with the land one three story dwelling, house and barn.

John P. Westport, for \$300 to the Westport Savings Bank, land with buildings, bounded north by land of Oscar Smith, east and south by the highway, and by land of Nellie Wright Weaver, in all one acre.

M. Wesley Sherwood to Charles Grant of East Orange, N. J., 10 acres of land on Sherwood's Island, bounded north by land of King W. Mansfield, of Norwalk, 35 acres with buildings, bounded north by land of Robert Gault, and Henry Seidt, deceased; east by land of Seidt and the highway; south by the highway and land of Domenico Nuzzo, and west by Camp street.

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